ZAMI Atlanta's Premiere Organization for Lesbians of African Descent

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"Acknowledged, our dreams can shape the realities of our future, if we arm them with the hard work and scrutiny of now." Audre Lorde

December, 2002

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Please meet our 2002 Scholars:

Donna C. Owens is a graduate student concentrating in Expressive Therapy at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Owens helped to create and implement Connecticut's first sexual minority youth project.

Charles Stephens attends Georgia State University in Atlanta where he is studying Women's Studies. Stephens proclaims, " I am a walking paradox. A young black man that is pro-feminist, a black person that is also gay, a young person that still believes."

Melissa Crosby attends Olivet College in Olivet, Michigan: the first college in the United States by charter to admit minorities and women. In 2002, during her sophomore year, Crosby became a Co-founder and President of Common Cause, Olivet's first l/g/b/t , and straight alliance.

Abigail Sewell identifies as artist, activist and leader. Sewell is in her second year at the University of Florida where she is majoring in Materials Science and Engineering and hopes to squeeze in a second degree in English during her four-year tenure.

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Simone Bell is a graduating senior at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia where she is an English major. Bell who is a writer and poet believes that as a black, lesbian, womyn, it is her responsibility to allow her light to shine in the middle of darkness as a beacon for those who are lost.

According to Beatrice Sullivan, "Only until I realized my identity as a queer woman of color writer/ poet activist, did I become truly comfortable with myself." As a 16-year-old junior in high school, Sullivan was one of two teens invited to speak at the first National Black Lesbian Conference. She entered Oberlin College last fall where she is an English and Writing major.

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In community spirit,

Mary Anne Adams,

Executive Director

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goal setting, project planning, community awareness, and personal leadership assessment. Gordon is a poet and volunteers as a poetry assistant in a women's prison. She has finished her first book of poetry entitled, Brown Girl Blues.

Simone Bell, the recipient of **The Kelley D. Alexander Award** is a graduating senior at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia where she serves as a mentor to ADORE, (Affirmed Daughters of Ruth Ellis) an African-American lesbian/ bisexual questioning organization. As an English major, Bell's future goal is to receive a graduate degree in Creative Writing. Bell who is a writer and poet believes that as a black, lesbian, womyn, it is her responsibility to allow her light to shine in the middle of darkness as a beacon for those who are lost. She lives in Atlanta with her partner of 13 years.

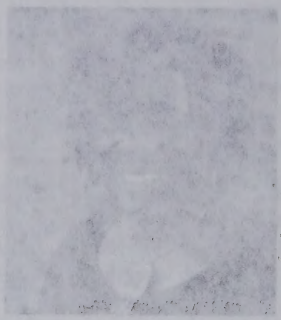
Simone Bell

Jonathan A. Jones, the recipient of **The Edith E. Biggers Award** has been on the battlefield for many years fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS and substance abuse in her community. Jones has received educational and organizational training from several state and national agencies on issues such as HIV/ AIDS and Chemical Dependency. She has devoted her time and energy serving as outreach coordinator for Brotha's and Sista's, a Black lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender organization committed to providing outreach and education on safe sex issues and HIV prevention. After working for many years as a Patient Care Technician, Jones recently resolved that she would enter the University of Arkansas in 2002 to work toward her goal of becoming a Registered Nurse. Jones resides in Little Rock, Arkansas with her 13 year old daughter.

Leslie Johnson, the recipient of **The Sheryl Burke Award** left her hometown of Chicago, Illinois, to enter Stanford University as a freshman in the fall of 2000. Quickly, Johnson found herself mired in many communities. Through courage and determination, she found her way. While holding a position as Financial Chair of Black and Queer at Stanford (BlaQS), attending the Rainbow Christian Fellowship, and serving on the LGBT Speakers Bureau, Johnson lived in the black theme dorm, Ujamaa, and was a member of the Black Student Union while juggling a full academic load, a position on the Women's Rugby Team, and a slot in Stanford's Symphonic Chorus. A Product Design major, Johnson is spending the fall semester of 2002 in Italy studying Italian.

Abigail Sewell, the recipient of **The Sheryl Burke Award**, identifies as Artist, Activist and Leader. Sewell is entering her second year at the University of Florida where she is majoring in Materials Science and Engineering and hopes to squeeze in a second degree in English during her four year tenure. She serves as Director of Women Affairs for the Pride Student Union and produced a major show last year entitled "Exodus Into the Erotic". Sewell has also been appointed to the planning committee for Pride Awareness Month 2003. She is the 2002 Ladyfest South Slam Champion and placed 2nd at the Windy City LGBT Poetry Slam in July 2002. Sewell just finished production of her first chapbook, Southern Black Girl Crying, published by Kings Crossing Publishing.

Taquelia Washington, the recipient of **The Cherie Caldwell Award**, is pursuing an advanced degree in Social Work at San Jose State. Washington has spent most of her time in recent years helping others by serving as a counselor in the House, a student-operated service at UC-Davis that provides safe and confidential counseling to students



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experiencing emotional distress as well as providing counseling at the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Resource Center.

Alicia Skillman, the recipient of **The Ruth C. Ellis Award**, is a resident of Detroit, Michigan and is studying Physics at Oakland University in her quest to become a Patent Attorney. Skillman is currently working as an Associate Attorney assisting in patent prosecution and litigation. Very active in her community, Skillman founded Family Reunion: PFLAG Detroit for People of Color in 2001. She also serves as vice chair of the Triangle Foundation, which is Michigan's largest gay rights advocacy group and volunteers with S.P.I.C.E. (Sistahs Providing Intelligence, Creativity & Empowerment) a discussion and social group.

Melissa Crosby, the recipient of **The Joan Garner Award**, attends Olivet College in Olivet, Michigan: the first college in the United States by charter to admit minorities and women. In 2002, during her sophomore year, Crosby became a Co- founder and President of Common Cause, Olivet's first lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and straight alliance. During the last school year, under her leadership, Common Cause organized over 30 events at this rural college of 850 students. As a result, she was honored by her college with a Diversity Award, along with the most prestigious annual award, The Olivet Cup for outstanding leadership in individual and social responsibility. An Economic Development major, Crosby also serves as Vice President of Finance & Administration for the Student Alliance Council.

According to **Beatrice Sullivan**, the recipient of **The Sha' Mendon Award**, "Only until I realized my identity as a queer woman of color writer/ poet activist, did I become truly comfortable with myself." For all four years of high school, Sullivan worked with Youth Communication (YC), an organization geared towards the self-empowerment of young people. She was also a member of a high school Women Writers Group and worked at Atlanta's only feminist women's bookstore. As a 16-year-old junior in high school, Sullivan was one of two teens invited to speak at the first National Black Lesbian Conference in 2001. She entered Oberlin this fall where she will major in English and Writing.

Donna C. Owens, the recipient of **The Sherry Turner Award** is a graduate student concentrating in Expressive Therapy at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. A passionate activist and organizer, Owens helped to create and implement Connecticut's first sexual minority youth project-- a program specifically designed to develop leadership and organizing skills in young lesbians, bisexual women and gay men of color. As a research educator at The Institute of Community Research, she co-authored the Urban Women Against Substance Abuse Program (UWASA) curriculum, which has been disseminated nationally. As a member of the Urban Artists Initiative, a national demonstration program for emerging urban artists, Owens currently performs with other artists and musicians on a regular basis.

Charles Stephens, the recipient of **The Tony Daniels Community Ally Award**, attends Georgia State University in Atlanta where he is studying Women's Studies. Stephens proclaims, " I am a walking paradox. A young black man that is pro-feminist, a black person that is also gay, a young person that still believes." Stephens is a founding member of The Black Rainbow, a discussion group for young Black queer men. He also serves on the Board of Directors and is Vice-Chair of the finance committee of the National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC), a national queer organization that supports the efforts of grassroots queer youth organizations. Active in campus affairs, Stephens is Chair of the Public Relations Committee of the Student Judicial Board and is Arts and Entertainment writer for the school newspaper.

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